

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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An Independent Religious Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennia. Return of Christ. Opposes Sin, Modernism, and Denominational Overlordship

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TRAVAIL OF SOUL

BY DR. OSWALD J. SMITH
Pastor, People's Church, Toronto

We read in Isa. 46:8 that "as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children"; and this is the most fundamental element in the work of God. Can children be born without pain? Can there be birth without travail? Yet how many expect in the spiritual realm that which is not possible in the natural! Oh, my brethren, nothing, absolutely nothing short of soul-travail will bring forth spiritual children! Finney tells us that he had no words to utter, he could only groan and weep when pleading with God for a lost soul. That was true travail.

Can we travail for a drowning child; but not for a perishing soul? It is not hard to weep when we realize that our little one is sinking below the surface for the last time. Anguish is spontaneous then. Not hard to agonize when we see the casket containing all that we love on earth being borne out of the home. Ah, no; tears are natural at such a time! But oh, to realize and know that souls, precious, never dying souls are perishing all around us, going out into the blackness of darkness and despair, eternally lost, and yet to feel no anguish, shed no tears, know no travail! How cold our hearts are! How little we know of the compassion of Jesus! And yet God can give us this, and the fault is ours if we do not have it.

Jacob, you remember, travailed until he prevailed. But oh, who is doing it today? Who is really travelling in prayer? How many, even

of our most spiritual Christian leaders are content to spend half an hour a day on their knees, and then pride themselves on the time they have given to God! We expect extraordinary results, and extraordinary results are quite possible; signs and wonders will follow, but only through extraordinary efforts in the spiritual realm. Hence, nothing short of continuous, agonizing pleading for souls, hours upon hours, days and nights of prayer, will ever avail. Therefore, "gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests; howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land unto the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord" (Joel 1:13-14). Ah, yes, Joel knew the secret. Let us then lay aside everything else, and "cry unto the Lord."

"We read in the biographies of our forefathers, who were most successful in winning souls, that they prayed for hours in private. The question therefore arises, can we get the same results without following their example? If we can, then let us prove to the world that we have found a better way; but if not, then in God's name let us begin to follow those who thru faith and patience obtained the promise. Our forefathers wept and prayed and agonized before the Lord for sinners to be saved, and would not rest until they were slain by the Sword of the Word of God. (CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

Do You Believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit According to Acts 2:2-4?

BY THE EDITOR

Two months ago I had a letter in which I was asked: "Do you believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2:3, 4?"

I am glad to answer the question. First, I believe that what is described in Acts 2:2-4 actually happened. The Scripture says: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

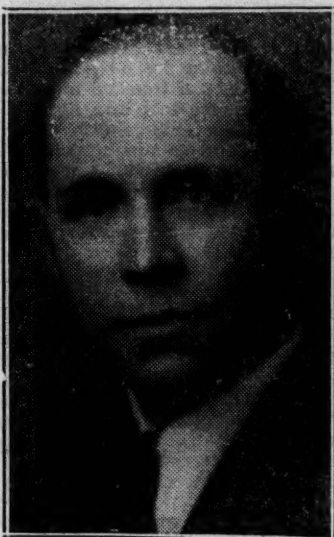
Second, I believe that the power of the Holy Spirit for soul winning, is for us today exactly as it was for them. I believe that we too may be "filled with the Holy Ghost," exactly as these people were in Acts 2:4. And I believe that it will have the same principal effect with us as with them, that is, we will have power to witness for Jesus, power to win souls, just as they did, so that "the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls," as verse 41 in the same chapter says. That is the power that was promised by Jesus in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Let me say again we can have today the power of the Holy Spirit.

I believe it is something besides salvation. I do not care whether you say, "filled with the Holy Ghost," as Acts 2:4 and Acts 4:31 say, or "baptized with the Holy Ghost," as Jesus promised in Acts 1:5, speaking about Pentecost. I think He meant that a Christian should simply be overwhelmed or covered with the Holy Spirit for service; and certainly these had that happen to them at Pentecost.

I believe that when people are saved they are all buried into the body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, that is, made a part of Christ's mystical body, baptized into it by the Holy Spirit, as I Corinthians 12:13 says. But I believe that is an entirely different matter from the filling or baptizing, or anointing of the Holy Spirit for soul winning power. And certainly every Christian can have this blessed power of the Holy Spirit for soul winning.

And let us remember, that no one has any right to claim to be baptized with the Holy Spirit in the Bible sense, or filled with the Holy Spirit, unless he is winning souls like these New Testament Christians did when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The proof of being filled or baptized with the Holy Spirit, like Christians had at Pentecost, is that power which is mentioned in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and



DR. JOE HENRY HANKINS



DR. OSWALD J. SMITH

Holy Things

BY JOE HENRY HANKINS, D.D.
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas

(Preached at the First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, Sunday morning, December 8, 1940, and stenographically reported.)

Text: Lev. 10:10: "And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."

"That ye may put difference between holy and unholy," or that you may recognize that there is a striking significance when God says a thing is holy, and that you may realize that there is a difference in that thing and other things—that it is to be recognized and treated accordingly.

Now with that in view, let us read another passage of Scripture—Lev. 27:30. "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." Now this morning I want us to think together about holy things, and particularly the statement of God's Word that the tithe is holy. The first thing I want to ask everyone of us this morning who name the name of Christ, who claim to believe God's Word and take the position that we Baptists take—that the Bible is absolute authority and that when God says a thing that settles it; it is the last word and nobody has the right to question it. Now that being the case, let me plead with you this morning, beloved, not to dodge the issue not only on this, but on anything that God says. Another thing, let us not close our minds to

any truth of God or against anything that God says. Let us always maintain open minds that if we are wrong, we want to know it—not that I have settled it and will not be changed. That is the position that so many take. But the redeemed of God cannot afford to take a position like that to any truth even if that truth may seem to us to cut right across our own personal opinions. Then let me say this—if the Bible teaches tithing and if God requires it we ought to want to know the truth about it, and we can know whether the Bible teaches it or not.

Then another thing. If God does require it and we refuse to do it, we set aside the Word of God. We are making ourselves a law unto ourselves; we are assuming authority above the Word of God. If God's Word teaches tithing and we refuse to do it, we are not only assuming authority above God, but we are denying God's right to make the claim, and we are denying God's ownership of the material possessions in our hands and are saying to God, "You have no right to tell me how much I should give back to you—it belongs to me and I will tell you how much I will give." Follow me this morning—think with me.

Listen again! If we acknowledge that God's Word does teach it and we say we cannot afford to do it, then we are accusing God of being unfair and of demanding more than is just or right. Many a person has said to me, "I believe the (CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO)

Almost Persuaded

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

(Preached September 15, 1941, over WJJD, Chicago, on Christian Business Men's Program. Recorded for use in The Sword of the Lord.)

Now open your Bibles to Acts, chapter 26 and we will read beginning with verse 24. I read you the story of Felix the other day and how he lost his soul. And now here is another man to whom Paul the prisoner preached.

"And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

"But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

"For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner."

"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The Revised Version has a slightly different wording but the meaning does not change. It is still true that this man was almost persuaded to be a Christian, but he was not per-

suaded, and he did not accept Christ, and he was lost.

Many Almost Persuaded

Now I call your attention to five things in connection with this passage. The first of the five is that there are multitudes of people everywhere who are deeply convicted and are almost persuaded to be saved. That was true in the Bible. I read you how Felix said, "Paul, a more convenient time I am going to call on you about this. I'll ask for you again and let you tell me more about it at a more convenient time." And yet Felix was never saved. I remind you that the Centurion by the cross of Christ, when he saw the earthquake and the things that were done, said to his companion, "Truly this was the Son of God." He was almost persuaded to be saved, though the Scripture does not say that he trusted the Saviour. I'm sure that Judas Iscariot was almost persuaded; in fact, I dare say that when they sat together at that little supper, preliminary to the passover meal, and when finally Satan entered into Judas, and Jesus said, "What thou doest, do quickly," I am satisfied that in Judas' heart the matter was still an unsettled question, and he had hoped some day to be saved, some day to be saved, until that time, until irrationally and blindly in a sudden, consuming hate, he went out to do anything Satan told him to do. I say, how many there are who have been almost persuaded to be saved. And I think that among (CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO)

EDITOR AT ELKHART, KAN.

The editor will begin a three weeks' revival campaign with the First Baptist Church of Elkhart, Kansas, January 11. Readers in that area are invited to attend when possible. Rev. White is the pastor, and we look for fine fellowship and the salvation of precious souls.

The editor is now at Charlotte, North Carolina with the meeting of the International Association of Evangelists, has spoken twice, and will speak again tomorrow in two churches, God willing.

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Almost Persuaded

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

those who hear me now there are many people who are almost persuaded, but who are yet unconvinced. And so I hope you will listen prayerfully.

Almost Persuaded Means Still An Unsundered Rebel

The second thing is, I would like for you to face the fact, why are you almost persuaded? Now part of you is persuaded and part of you is not persuaded. The matter is unsettled whether you will be a Christian or not.

Now first of all, in the case of this man, Paul said, "I know that you believe the prophets." So it was not unsettled as to whether Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophets, whether Jesus was the Son of God, whether Jesus was born of a virgin, whether He was to be the King of the Jews. And besides that, he said, "This thing was not done in a corner, Agrippa, and you know about the healings, you know about the dead raised, you know about blind eyes that were given sight, you know the preaching of this man Jesus, and so it was not done in a corner. And I know that you believe the prophets." So put this thing down, then, that doctrinally this matter was already settled. He didn't say, "I am not sure whether Christianity is right." He didn't say, "I am not quite settled yet as to whether Jesus is the Son of God." No. And that is not the question. That is a lying excuse from the mouth of many a man who isn't saved, and I again say it, it is a lie. The real reason is deeper than that. With most people the question not settled yet is not in the mind. It is deeper than that. Evidently the man's conscience was convicted, and you who hear me today know in your heart you are a sinner and you know you need a Saviour and no matter what you say about preachers and about churches and about the Bible, it is still a fact that honest people confess they are poor, wicked sinners who need a Saviour. This man, struck to the heart, said, "You almost get me, Paul. I am almost persuaded to settle this matter." He was convicted in his conscience of his sins. He was persuaded in his head of the truth of the gospel. And everyone who hears me now knows you need a Saviour.

Will you please tell me, is there anybody here who finds any fault with Jesus? Can you say, "I knew a man who trusted Jesus Christ and Christ failed him"? Can you say, "I knew a man that when he got saved it led him into sin"? Can you say, "I knew a man and because he got saved, that made him a worse husband, it made him a drunkard, it made him a whore-monger, it made a wicked woman-chaser because he was saved"? You can't say it. You do not mean it. You are not honest if you do not honestly say, "I know in my head I would be a better man if I were an earnest and devout Christian." Some Christians are not what they ought to be, but you know that being the right kind of a Christian and having Christ as your Master and having your heart and life changed would be happier for you now, it would be better for you in eternity. It is a matter of wisdom and it is a matter of right. Your head and your conscience are convinced about it.

Then what is it that is not persuaded? Evidently the part still unpersuaded is the will—the will. And he said to Paul, "I am almost persuaded, but not quite." What is lacking is this: This thing was not done in a corner. I know the life Jesus lived, I know how He died, I believe the gospel, I believe the

prophets, so that is not the trouble. The trouble is, I am not yet willing to give up my sins."

What he really meant when this man said, "I am almost persuaded," and what is true about you is, you are really still a rebel against God. You want your own way. You will not surrender your heart. It is down in the heart. Now and then somebody says, "Well, I just can't believe this, that, and the other." My friends, your trouble is not with what you believe. Your head may be cracked, but really what is wrong is your poor, rotten, festering heart of unbelief. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The Scripture says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Jesus said to the two on the road down to Emmaus in Luke 23, "O fools and slow of heart to believe." So if you are not quite persuaded to be a Christian, I know where your trouble is. It is in a rebellious, wicked will. You want your own way, and though you know what is right, you don't want to do right. You have got to surrender to do right about it. Therefore you are still condemned and unconvinced.

Almost Persuaded Means Satan Still Master

The third thing to which I call your attention is that Satan is still the master of every heart that is not wholly persuaded. Satan is still the master of every heart that is not wholly persuaded to be a Christian. You know people can be saved and they can know so little about the Bible. I remember a dear man in the darkest heathendom who had never heard a gospel sermon and he did not own a Bible. When I said to him, "The only priest you need is Jesus. He can give you peace of heart," suddenly the light flashed in his face and in his soul and later he gave conclusive evidence that he was truly saved. Did you know, sometimes I have met people and in a moment, just in a moment's time, they have surrendered to Christ and have been saved. They needed teaching yet. They needed more indoctrination and the matter cleared up in the assurance of their minds, but a soul is saved the minute it honestly, contritely surrenders to God through faith in Christ. Do you know, once it was that missionaries thought that a heathen man in China or in Africa couldn't be saved until he had a long series of teaching. Now the China Inland Mission and some other fundamental, sound, evangelistic missionaries have found that they can go and preach to a heathen audience of Chinese and preach Christ as Saviour and call people to the invitation to accept Christ and they can be saved there as it is if people have heard the gospel all of their days. No, my friends, what is really wrong isn't the head. But when a man is still not persuaded, it means that Satan is still the master of his heart and the heart hasn't yielded. That is why you are still unpersuaded. Oh, may God open your hearts as I speak to you, that you will say, "I will not let my wicked, rebellious, sinful heart keep Christ out any more."

Your Soul Is Risked for Your Sin

The fourth thing to which I call your attention is this, that when you are almost persuaded, you are risking your soul for the love of sin. We need not hem and haw about it. After all there never is a good reason to keep one away from Christ. There never is a good reason why you go on rejecting the one who loves you. There never is a good reason. It is a wicked sin, and for the love of sin you are rejecting Christ and risking your soul's salvation. So if I were you, I would say today, before I went out of this place, the Grand Opera House in Chicago, or before I turned off the radio there in my home, I would say, "Is it worth it? How much is it worth? Is it worth it if it's true?" Suppose you say, "Well, I like my drink." Suppose you drink on and swill down your barrels of beer and then when you fry in Hell forever, you will call yourself a fool because you know it is not worth that. Suppose it is adultery. Suppose you have your secret love nests and suppose you go on your wild way in sin and enjoy it to the fullest if you think you can enjoy it. At the last it will burn and smart and cut. It will be a torment of Hell in your memory and conscience. But suppose you lose your soul for it, is it worth it? If you lose your soul, is

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Bible teaches tithing, but I cannot afford to do it." I say if you take that position, you are accusing God of being unfair and unjust and of demanding more than you are able to do. Now beloved, God doesn't do that. God is fair, and whatever God does is right, and

it worth it? Suppose you say, Well I will have my good time. I'll say now, you are risking your poor soul that is immortal and will spend eternity somewhere forever. And you are doing it, not for conscience, not for principle, but for the love of sin. You are risking your soul for the love of sin that has enslaved your heart and is enshrined there now as ruler and boss of your heart. Oh, don't risk your soul! Almost persuaded, this man said, He knew he ought to be saved. Paul had touched his heart. His conscience told him he was a sinner. The Holy Spirit of God called on him to surrender and be saved. He said, "Paul, you almost get me to do it. I am almost persuaded." But only almost. He was still a slave to sin and he did not surrender.

Almost Persuaded Is Still Altogether Lost

And then the fifth question, the fifth point I make is this: almost persuaded is lost still, and lost forever. Some people have an idea, "Well, I'm almost saved." Some people have an idea they are nearer Heaven because they are under conviction. But that is not necessarily true. You may be nearer Hell. The man who has been convicted, the man who has faced this question, the man who has weighed the cost of it, the man who has thought the thing through, he may be all the closer to driving away the Spirit of God forever, he may be all the nearer to waking up in the torments of the damned in Hell. No, my friends, outside the door still, the poor lost sinner is the man who is almost persuaded.

I was in revival services in Denver, Colorado, and some way I remember those cases. I suppose in that meeting there must have been, oh dozens and dozens of conversions, and there must have been very happy ones. And I'll tell you the truth, as I look back now, I've only a faint recollection of two or three of those saved. And yet there is enshrined in my memory, as a haunting conscience there comes again a picture of a man to whom I talked about his soul, and I pled with him, and he was going to be saved but he never was. I remember I preached and I cracked down on sin hard and that man stood around after the services, waiting to meet me. He said, "Preacher, go to it. I like to hear a plain-speaking preacher." I said, "Are you saved?" He said, "No." I said, "You had better be getting things settled for yourself then and not thinking about others." He said, "Well, I'm going to be saved." I said, "I want you to settle this thing now." He said, "I'll probably do it while you are here." He said, "I enjoy your preaching. I'll probably get it settled while you are here." And I said, "Do it now." No, he wasn't ready. Time went on, I asked him again to take the Saviour next to the last night of that campaign in the big Englewood Baptist Tabernacle. I talked to that man in the back of the tabernacle about his soul. He promised me. He said, "Preacher, I'll do it tomorrow night sure." I said, "You won't. Your heart will be as hard as stone, or you will be sick in the hospital, or you will be knocked down by an automobile, or you will be called away on business. You won't do it. If you give Satan an option like that, he will keep you out of that service, or he will make your heart as hard as a stone. You won't do it. No," I said, "do it tonight." I remember his wife stood by his side and held him by the arm and wept. His grown daughter held his arm on the other side and patted his shoulder and said, "Daddy, you ought to do it. Brother Rice is right. Do it tonight, Daddy." But he wouldn't do it. He said, "I promise you I'll do it tomorrow night sure; I promise you." I said, "I'm afraid you won't do it. Do it now." "No," he said, "I'll do it tomorrow night." And the next night came, and I gave the invitation after I had preached; and we had

(CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

whatever God requires is just. The judge of all the earth will do right every time—you can count on that.

Now if we say the Bible teaches it and we are not able to do it, or we cannot afford to do it, then we are doing something else—we are accusing God of unfaithfulness in keeping the promises that He has made in connection with it. Just as certainly as God will keep His promise to those who will faithfully bring the tithe, God will prosper materially and spiritually, every person who will do it. For God has said in no unmistakable terms in His Book that if we will do it, He will put the means in our hands to do it with. Now that is God's obligation in the matter. If I say that I can't afford to do it, then what am I going to do with such promises as these? "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." If we say we can't afford to do it, then what about this promise? "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Listen again: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." If I say that I believe the Bible teaches it, but my circumstances make it impossible then I accuse God of being unfaithful in keeping such promises as that.

Listen again: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." If I say I cannot afford it, then what am I going to do with a promise like that? Listen again: Peter said, "Lo we have left all, and followed thee." Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left house or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

What are we going to do about such a clear promise as this: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you? Read it for yourself, and see how He tells us to trust Him and not worry about what we shall eat, drink or wear. "For after all these things do the heathen seek." He is telling us that when Christian people worry about these things we are acting just like the heathen. But if we will seek first the kingdom of God, all these material things we need will be added. O beloved, what we need, this morning under God, is faith enough to step out on the promises of God, believing unfaithfully and unfalteringly in them.

Listen again: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; He hath given to the poor; His righteousness remaineth forever. Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both ministereth bread to your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness." If you will do what? Give to God like you ought. That is His promise and it is in the New Testament. So many people say because a thing is in the Old Testament they don't believe it will apply to us today. When did God ever repudiate the Old Testament, or when did anybody ever hear the preposterous statement that the Old Testament is not God's Word?

There are three things in the Bible about the tithe to which I call attention this morning. First: A significant declaration. Second: A startling accusation. Third: A glorious promise.

I. The Declaration

God said, "The tithe is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." (Lev. 27:30) O beloved, hear me this morning! God means something when He speaks in His Word of holy things. What does it mean when God says a thing is holy? First, it means that it is sanctified—set apart by Almighty God for a specific and definite purpose:

it is dedicated, not by you and me, but by Almighty God for a specific purpose. Now what is the purpose of holy things? The Bible teaches that holy things are those things set apart for, and dedicated to, the service of God and to that alone.

Listen! He says, "The tithe is the Lord's." But you say, "That is in the Old Testament." Yes, but it is the inspired Word of God, and God's Word says, "The tithe IS the Lord's." But you say, "I am in debt, and I ought to pay my debts first." But the Bible says, "The tithe IS the Lord's." You say, "I can just barely make ends meet as it is." But the Bible says, "The tithe IS the Lord's." You say, "I have loved ones that I have to support." Now that is a fine thing for anybody to do. And during these years of depression there is hardly a man anywhere who has an income who has not been helping some one dear to him. If it were known nearly everybody here with an income has been sharing it with some loved ones during the past ten years, and they have been doing it nobly. But, in the face of all that, the Bible says, "The tithe is the Lord's."

The Bible also says that the tithe is "holy unto the Lord." But you say, "I don't believe that applies to us now for that was given under the law." Well, law or no law, God said, "The tithe is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." You say, "But we are not under the law." Well, under law or under grace, it is still in the inspired Word of God that "the tithe is the Lord's. It is holy"—dedicated, sanctified, set apart by Almighty God, Himself, who said, "I change not." And He said, "The tithe is mine—it is holy unto the Lord." Now what does God mean? He meant that it is not to be used for anything else. If you will read the rest of the verses in the 27th chapter of Leviticus, you will find that God says we are to bring the tithe first—just as soon as you get your money the first tenth should be set aside for the Lord. God said, too, that if we don't bring the tithe first, but bring it later on we are to add 20 per cent to it. Even though you bring a tenth if you don't bring the first tenth, you "shall add thereto the fifth part thereof." What for? To show God that you are not trying to cheat or hold out on Him. Then God said

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HOLY THINGS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO)

when you go to tithe your herd or livestock take the first tenth—don't even look over them to see whether they be good or bad. And when you set that tenth aside and they look better than what you have left and you decide to swap with the Lord, God says if you change it, then the tenth and the change both become the Lord's. And God meant just what He said. You can't cheat God. You may cheat me and may cheat your fellow-man, but you can't cheat God. For the "tithes is the Lord's," and somewhere down the line God is going to collect it. He may collect in finances; He may collect in heartaches; He may collect in wayward children. The chairman of my Board of Deacons in a church in Texas stood in front of his place of business and said to me, "Preacher, I have heard you say that God will collect. If God ever collected from a fellow, He is collecting from me—not in dollars and cents—but in my children. When my children were growing up I gave too much thought, time and attention to making money and let my two boys grow up by themselves without the care, advice and attention and example of a father, while I let the things of God drift along. But now I have come to the place that I would give every dollar I have if I could bring those two boys back to God this morning. God is collecting in something much dearer than dollars and cents. You can come to the place where money doesn't mean a thing on earth." Then he said, "O how I wish I was back at the beginning again. I would put God where He belongs." God said when you put your hands on holy things the curse of God is on you.

What About Holy Things?

In the 10th chapter of Leviticus Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, had been slain, but God would not let Aaron go outside the camp to bury them because Aaron had the anointing oil of God on his head and that oil was holy. God told him to let somebody else go outside the tent to bury those boys, but that he could not uncover his head nor stand with the mourners because the holy oil of God was upon his head and God said, "You will die if you go out."

When Joshua and Israel were in the conquest of Canaan marching around Jericho God said, "I am going to fight this battle, but all the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron are consecrated unto the Lord." You remember when Achan in the conquest ran across a goodly Babylonish garment... and silver, and a wedge of gold" he coveted them. Thinking nobody would ever know, he tucked them away in his tent. Israel went down to Ai and was defeated. God told them they were defeated because there was sin in the camp. They cast lots to find out who was guilty and the lot fell on Achan. Then he came out and said he was guilty. "I saw them, coveted them and took them." Then God told Moses to take Achan and all his family and stone them. O you say God is too severe. I tell you what God is doing. He is dealing with men who have desecrated holy things and is teaching men that when God says a thing is holy they had better leave it alone. They took Achan, his wife, his children, his cattle, his household goods and all that he had and went outside the camp and "stoned them with stones and burned them with fire." Then they piled up stones over the place to stand there as a monument in the coming years that when God said a thing is mine—when a thing is dedicated to the Lord—you better let it alone. Achan knew what God had said about the holy things—he knew they were the Lord's and yet he had the audacity to deny the authority of God to claim a thing.

You remember when Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and ladies and commanded the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, to be brought that they might drink wine in them. Now these vessels were made of the same kind of gold and silver that many other vessels in Babylon were made of—just ordinary gold and silver. But one day when these vessels came from the hands of the silversmith and the goldsmith, the blood of a sacrifice was

shed and sprinkled on those vessels which represented the blood of Jesus. Then the holy anointing oil of God was poured upon those vessels and they were dedicated to the service of God in the holy temple. And from that day on, they ceased to be ordinary vessels of silver and gold. And listen, child of God, when the tithe comes into your hands, it ceases to be ordinary currency, silver or gold, but it becomes holy unto the Lord. "The tithe is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." One night in the height of that feast Belshazzar said, "Go get these vessels of silver and gold that my father took from the temple—we will fill them with wine and drink from them." But when they poured the wine into those vessels and in their drunken revelry lifted the vessels to their mouths to drink, bless your hearts, they didn't drink. For "in that same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick on the wall." This is the writing that appeared on the wall, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN—thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting... This night shall thy kingdom be divided and given to the Medes and Persians." God said in the same hour they started to drink from the vessels—in that moment, the finger of the hand appeared writing on the wall. What was it? God could put up with his revelry, but, Belshazzar, you have gone one step too far. You have taken holy vessels, sanctified by blood which represented the blood of Jesus Christ; you have laid your filthy hands on holy things and have dared in the doing of it to defile holy things. You have gone too far. The curse of God is on you.

Many people ask me why God would be so severe. God did it to set the example and to teach us that holy things should be regarded as such, and not to be used for any other purpose. You remember when the Ark was being brought back on the cart it looked like while they were crossing the stream that the cart was about to topple over and the Ark would fall into the stream, and Uzzah, a man who loved God and was rejoicing that the Ark was being brought back home, ran along by the side of the cart and when he saw it begin to careen just reached out his hand to keep it from falling. But we are told that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the Ark of God." Why? Uzzah, you knew that God had said the Ark was a holy thing; you knew that God had said if any man touch it he will die. Uzzah, God meant what He said about holy things. Friend, God means it today. I plead with you this morning that you pray this thing through. Take the Word of God and get on your knees and study and you will know the truth.

II. A Startling Accusation

Turn to Malachi 3:8, 9. There you will find the next thing in my message this morning—a startling accusation. God says, "Will a man rob God?" The question implies that men rob God. But can you conceive it; is it possible; is it conceivable that a man would rob God? Yet God says, "You have robbed me." They said, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" God answers, "In tithes and offerings." Then God says in the next verse, "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." In other words God says, "You are cursed because you have had the audacity to lay your hands on that which God said was holy."

A man, just yesterday morning, gave me this testimony. He said, "Since I started to work for myself I have made more money than 99 per cent of the men in this town. When I started out I brought my tithe faithfully for a number of years, but I got to making so much that the tithe looked too big and I held out on God. And I tell you God never gave a man such a beating as He has given me—on one single transaction God took \$25,000 away from me." God not only collects but He charges a commission for collecting.

I was attending an Associational meeting in Texas some years ago and preached on stewardship. I made the statement about people robbing God when they don't give the tithe. Immediately after I sat down, a pastor got up, so incensed

and indignant at what I had said that his lips were quivering—his face was pale. He said, "Never will I make a statement like this preacher has made." He said, "I have in my church two widows who take in washing to make a living. I would suffer my right arm to be cut off before I would stand before my church and tell those two women that they were robbing God if they didn't give a tenth. I don't believe a word of it. I don't think any preacher has a right to stand up here and make a statement like Brother Hankins has made this morning." When he sat down nearly every preacher in the association was on his feet at the same time wanting to answer him—they did answer, too. That night he went home and said, "Listen, wife, I am not going to sleep to-night until I have settled this thing. Every one of my preacher brethren were against me today, and when they are all against me it looks like I might be wrong. Put the children to bed—I am going in this room alone. God and I are going to settle this tonight." About midnight he called for his wife and said, "Wife, come here. I have been wrong; God does teach tithing and the Bible does say we owe a tenth. Wife, it is going to cost us \$300 to get right on this thing, but if you are willing to go with me, we will go by the First National Bank of Whitewright in the morning and sign a note for \$300 and lay it on the table for the Lord." At the meeting the next morning he walked in and said, "I have a statement I want to make." And he pulled out that check for \$300 and laid it on the table and told us of his experience the night before, and said, "Anybody that loves the Lord and believes His Book that will get on his knees and study the Word and let the Holy Spirit lead him will come right where I have come."

III. A Glorious Promise

I haven't time for the last point. I will just say this. Some of the most glorious promises God has ever made are made in connection with tithing. God said, "I will open you the windows of heaven." O beloved, in this time in which we live, I would be willing to die if I could just witness one more time the windows of heaven open on the people of God. O if we could but see the "goings in the mulberry trees"—the power of God moving upon His people today as the windows of heaven were opened by the hand of Almighty God upon our poor, thirsty, parched souls!

I walked out yonder yesterday afternoon on that place where we are going to build our new temple of worship and sat down, bowed my head and prayed and then I went back after dark and got on my knees and said, "Lord, God, like Simeon of old prayed that he might live to look on the face of the Christ, Lord, here I am. If you will give me the privilege of leading my church to do this thing and build this place for a lighthouse for God, Lord the day it is dedicated if you want to take me on home, I will be satisfied. I will, God my witness, if we could just see the windows of heaven open upon this old church; if I could just see her baptized with the power of God again; if I could just see her rise up to claim the promises of God, I would feel like I had done what the Lord wanted me to do, and would be ready to go. I believe we are at our Kadesh-Barnea, ready to go over into the promised land for God. Will you go with me?"

Figure it any way you will—I believe God and believe He will keep every promise He has made—I would rather have the nine tenths plus the blessings of my heavenly Father than to have all my income under any conceivable condition. I call your attention to the text, "And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy." I call your attention also to the statement of God's inspired Word, "The tithe is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." And I leave with you the glorious promise of our Father, "Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse... and prove me now herewith... if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

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THE SWORD OF THE LORD

Do You Believe In the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19, 20). All saved people have the Holy Spirit dwelling in their bodies. But that does not mean that all saved people are filled with the Holy Spirit and have His power. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is one thing; the filling of the Holy Spirit (or anointing; or pouring out of the Spirit, or gift of the Spirit, or to be buried in the Holy Spirit, baptized, covered, overwhelmed) is an entirely different matter. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit. But not every Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit for service.

Third, I do not believe that we should necessarily expect the same outward signs as recorded in Acts 2:2, 3, 4. There was the sound of a cyclone, "a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." I do not think that this miracle has to be repeated for people to be filled with the Holy Spirit and given His power. There was the miracle of tongues of fire sitting on the people, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

But the Bible did not say that we should expect this miracle, and so we need not expect it when there is no special occasion for it. And again there is the miracle of tongues, or foreign languages. These people were given the power to speak in the languages of other people who were present, to preach to them the gospel. Verse 6 below shows "every man heard them speak in his own language." Verse 8 says they asked, "How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" And then there is given a list of the foreign languages spoken on that day, in Acts 2:9-11, sixteen foreign languages. There was no unknown language, that is, I mean every language spoken was some regular foreign language, and people heard and understood in their own languages. Now, of course, that would not be necessary when everybody present can speak the same language, and it would be foolish for us to demand that God give this miracle.

Please notice that these three miracles, the cyclone, the tongues of fire, and the foreign languages were not promised ahead of time. They were incidental miracles. Then please notice that they were not repeated the next time people were filled with the Holy Ghost. See Acts 4:31 where the Bible says again exactly the same thing, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Pentecostal people make a great mistake in picking out the miracle of foreign languages and trying to imitate that, when they do not have the rushing mighty wind, or the tongues of fire sitting on them, so everybody can see. And they make an even greater mistake in trying to speak some heavenly language that nobody can understand, when that is not what people had in Bible times at all.

If you hear any one say, "I was baptized with the Holy Spirit just like people were at Pentecost," then you ask him if there was a cyclone, the sound of a rushing mighty wind filling all the house. If they did not have this sign then they have no right to claim that they had the outward signs of Acts 2:2-4. If you hear him say that he was baptized with the Holy Spirit with signs according to Acts, chapter 2, then ask him if there was a "tongue like as of fire" visible sitting on him so everybody present could see it. That happened at Pentecost, and if it did not happen to him then he need not claim the outward signs of Acts 2:2-4. And if he claims that he spoke in other tongues as they did at Pentecost, then ask him if people were present from other nations and if they heard him speak in their own tongue in which they were born. If he did not speak in a known language to people who understood him, then he did not have what people had at Pentecost. Tongues in the Bible were simply foreign

languages and God never gave any one power to speak in a foreign language for Him unless there were people present who needed to hear the gospel in their own tongue in which they were born. It was never just some heavenly language, some jabber that was not understood.

And notice this that never once in the Bible is "speaking with tongues" mentioned as the sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit or of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And notice this also that many times in the Bible people were filled with the Holy Spirit who did not speak in other tongues. See the case of John the Baptist (Luke 1:15, of Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), of Zacharias (Luke 1:67), of Paul the apostle (Acts 9:17), of the new converts at Samaria (Acts 8:17). These Scriptures mention the first time any of these persons are said to have been filled with the Holy Spirit, and yet they did not have speaking in tongues as an evidence. God never intended this modern fad "speaking in tongues" to be an evidence of being filled or baptized with the Holy Spirit. No, the evidence is the "power" plainly promised in Acts 1:8, soul winning power.

Here is an important fact, too: our modern Pentecostal friends send missionaries to foreign countries and these missionaries find they cannot speak the languages of the heathens but have to learn the languages, though they claim to have the "gift of tongues," or claim to speak in tongues. I recently read a letter from a Pentecostal missionary who spoke of having to learn the language of the heathen people. So "speaking in tongues" does not mean the same to Pentecostal people as it did in Bible times, for example, at Pentecost.

And what a pity it is that Christians should be so occupied with wanting a sign which Jesus did not promise and neglect to seek the soul winning power of the Holy Spirit that is so plainly promised. And some people who never win souls, yet claim they are "baptized with the Holy Ghost" and bemoan other Christians whom God has filled with His Spirit in great soul winning power.

In summary let me say that I do believe Christians can have the power of Pentecost. I do not believe that those incidental miracles of the wind, the fire and foreign languages were usually repeated, that none of them need be expected in just those forms today. If God did not repeat the same signs in Bible times, we should not expect Him to do it now. God changes outward manifestations, incidental matters, according to His own will to fit the circumstances. Certainly none of these three incidental miracles, the wind, the tongues of fire on the people, or the foreign languages were signs of the baptism of the Holy Spirit then, nor are they signs of the baptism of the Holy Spirit now.

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or

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Travail of Soul

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

That was the secret of their mighty success; when things were slack and would not move they wrestled in prayer till God poured out His Spirit upon the people and sinners were converted." (For Those Who Seek.)

All men of God have become men mighty in prayer. The sun never rose on China, we are told, without finding Hudson Taylor on his knees. No wonder the China Inland Mission has been so wonderfully owned of God!

Conversion is the operation of the Holy Spirit, and prayer is the power that secures that operation. Souls are not saved by man but by God, and since He works in answer to prayer we have no choice but to follow the Divine plan. Prayer moves the Arm that moves the world.

Prevailing prayer is not easy. Only those who have wrestled with the powers of darkness know how hard it is. Paul says that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12). And when the Holy Spirit prays it is "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

Oh, how few find time for prayer! There is time for everything else, time to sleep and time to eat, time to read the newspaper and the novel, time to visit friends, time for everything else under the sun, but—no time for prayer, the most important of all things, the one great essential.

Think of Susannah Wesley who, in spite of the fact that she had nineteen children, found time to shut herself in her room for a full hour each day, alone with God. My friends, it is not so much a case of finding time as it is of making time. And we can make time if we will.

So important did the Apostles consider it that they would not even wait on tables, but said: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." (Acts 6:4). Yet how many ministers are burdened with the financial side of the work, and how many officials expect them to bear it! No wonder their spiritual work is of such little account!

"And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12). Such is the record concerning the Son of God; and if it was necessary for Him how much more so for us! Oh, think of it!—"all night in prayer." How many times could that be written of us? Hence, His strength! Hence, our weakness!

How fervently do the prophets of old urge a life of prayer! Hear Isaiah as he exclaims: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isa. 62:6-7).

"Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them; wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17).

And not only did they urge prayer, but they themselves prayed. Daniel says, "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; and I prayed unto the Lord my God and made my confession." (Dan 9:3-4). And Ezra also wielded the same mighty weapon in every time of difficulty. "I fell upon my knees," he says, "and spread out my hands unto the

Lord my God" (Ezra 9:5). Then follows his most remarkable prayer. The same method was followed by Nehemiah. "And it came to pass when I heard their words," he relates, "that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days and fasted, and prayed before the God of Heaven" (Neh. 1:4).

Such was also the practice of the Early Church. When Peter was in prison it is stated that "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him," and "many were gathered together praying."

And now, in closing, may we turn to the record of God's dealings with His honoured servants, and hear what they have to say about the secret of results. And oh, may He put upon us the burden of prayer and supplication that rested upon these mighty spiritual giants and filled them with such travail!

"John Livingstone spent the whole night prior to June 21, 1830, in prayer and conference, being designated to preach next day. After he had been speaking for an hour and a half a few drops of rain disconcerted the people, but Livingstone asking them if they had any shelter from the storm of God's wrath went on another hour. There were about 500 converted on the spot."—Livingstone of Shotts.

"I once knew a minister who had a Revival fourteen winters in succession. I did not know how to account for it, till I saw one of his members get up in a prayer meeting and make a confession. 'Brethren,' said he, 'I have been long in the habit of praying every Saturday night till after midnight, for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon us. And now, brethren,' and he began to weep, 'I confess that I have neglected it for two or three weeks.' The secret was out. That minister had a praying church."—Chas. G. Finney.

"Prevailing, or effectual prayer is that prayer which attains the blessing that it seeks. It is that prayer which effectually moves God. The very idea of effectual prayer is that it effects its object."—Chas. G. Finney.

"In a certain town there had been no Revival for many years; the Church was nearly extinct, the youth were all unconverted and desolation reigned unbroken. There lived in a retired part of the town an aged man, a blacksmith by trade, and of so stammering a tongue that it was painful to hear him speak. On one Friday, as he was at work in his shop alone, his mind became greatly exercised about the state of the church and of the impenitent. His agony became so great that he was induced to lay by his work, lock the shop door, and spend the afternoon in prayer.

"He prevailed, and on the Sabbath called on the minister and desired him to appoint a 'conference meeting.' After some hesitation, the minister consented, observing, however, that he feared few would attend. He appointed it the same evening at a large private house. When evening came, more assembled than could be accommodated in the house. All were silent for a time, until one sinner broke out in tears, and said if anyone could pray, would they pray for him? Another followed, and another, and still another, until it was found that persons from every quarter of the town were under deep conviction. And what was remarkable was that they all dated their conviction at the hour the old man was praying in his shop. A powerful Revival followed. Thus this old stammering man prevailed, and as a prince had power with God."—Chas. G. Finney.

"I have pleaded with God this day for hours, in the wood, for souls: He will give them. I know His sign. I shall have souls tonight. Yours, I trust, will be one. Night came, and with it such a power as I had never felt. Cries for mercy rang all over the chapel. Before the sermon was done, I, with many others, fell upon my knees to implore salvation."—One of Thos. Collins' Converts.

"I went to my lonely retreat among the rocks. I wept much as I besought the Lord to give me souls."—Thos. Collins.

"I spent Friday in secret fasting, meditation, and prayer for help on the Lord's day. About the middle of the sermon a man cried out: at the cry my soul ran over. I fell

to prayer, nor could we preach any more for cries and tears all over the chapel. We continued in intercessions, and salvation came."—Thos. Collins.

"He gave himself unto prayer. Woods and lonely wayside places became closets. In such exercises time flew unheeded. He stopped amid the solitary crags to pray, and Heaven so met him there that hours elapsed unconsciously. Strong in the might of such baptisms, he became bold to declare the cross, and willing to bear it."—Life of Thos. Collins.

"It loaded me down with great agony. As I returned to my room I felt almost as if I should stagger under the burden that was on my mind; and I struggled, and groaned, and agonized, but could not frame to present the case before God in words, but only in groans and tears. The spirit struggled within me with groanings that could not be uttered."—Chas. G. Finney.

"I proposed that we should observe a closet concert of prayer for the revival of God's work; that we should pray at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset, in our closets, and continue this for one week, when we should come together again and see what further was to be done. No other means were used for the revival of God's work. But the spirit of prayer was immediately poured out wonderfully upon the young converts. Before the week was out I learned that some of them, when they would attempt to observe this season of prayer, would lose all their strength and be unable to rise to their feet, or even stand upon their knees in their closets; and that some would be prostrate on the floor, and pray with unutterable groanings for the Outpouring of the Spirit of God. The Spirit was poured out and before the week ended all the meetings were thronged; and there was as much interest in religion, I think, as there has been at any time during the Revival."—Chas. G. Finney.

"I have often seen him come down stairs in the morning after spending several hours in prayer, with his eyes swollen with weeping. He would soon introduce the subject of his anxiety by saying, 'I am a broken-hearted man; yes, indeed, I am an unhappy man; not for myself, but on account of others. God has given me such a sight of the value of precious souls that I cannot live if souls are not saved. Oh, give me souls, or else I die!'"—Life of John Smith.

"God enabled me to so agonize in prayer that I was quite wet with perspiration, though in the shade and the cool wind. My soul was drawn out very much from the world, for multitudes of souls."—David Brainerd.

"Near the middle of the afternoon God enabled me to wrestle ardently in intercession for my friends. But just at night the Lord visited me marvellously in prayer. I think my soul never was in such an agony before. I felt no restraint; for the treasures of Divine grace were opened to me. I wrestled for my friends, for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes of poor souls, and for many that I thought were the children of God, personally in many different places. I was in such an agony from sun, half an hour high, till near dark, that I was all over wet with sweat."—David Brainerd.

"I withdrew for prayer, hoping for strength from above. In prayer I was exceedingly enlarged and my soul was as much drawn out as I ever remember it to have been in my life. I was in such anguish, and pleaded with so much earnestness and importunity, that when I rose from my knees I felt extremely weak and overcome. I could scarcely walk straight; my joints were loosed; the sweat ran down my face and body; and nature seemed as if it would dissolve."—David Brainerd.

"Prayer must carry on our work, as well as preaching. He does not preach heartily to his people who does not pray for them. If we do not prevail with God to give them repentance and faith, we are not likely to prevail with them to repent and believe. Paul gives us frequently his example of praying night and day for his hearers."—Richard Baxter.

"Several members of Jonathan Edwards' church had spent the whole night in prayer before he preached his memorable sermon,

Almost Persuaded

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO)

a lot of people saved and a blessed time. And then finally I left the pulpit and went back to him and said, "You promised God and you promised me you would take Christ tonight, and you haven't done it. Do it tonight!" He said, "Preacher, I'm not ready." And I couldn't budge him. After the service was over—I was worn out after speaking four times—I got a chair and sat down on the edge of the platform. One big old fellow, I remember, came and put his arm around my neck and nearly broke my neck as he pulled my head down on his shoulder and cried and patted me and said, "Preacher, I guess I'd have gone to Hell if you hadn't come here." And I remember a mother came with a nineteen year old boy. Her eyes were just shining with happiness as she said, "Brother Rice, I'll never forget you. We'll never forget you. You're the one that got my boy we've prayed about so much, and my boy is saved." Many others thanked me for the messages, and so on. But I got in the car that night with Harvey Springer and another or two and we set out for Dallas to be there, 900 miles away by Monday evening in time for service. We stopped at Colorado Springs for a little time that night, and then on down that ribbon of road, eighty miles an hour, hour after hour. You know I sat in the back seat of that Buick car and my soul was stirred within me and I said, "Oh, God, didn't I weep enough? What was wrong? What was the matter? Wasn't I plain and sharp enough? Didn't I pray enough? What was the matter?" And my heart goes back to that man. Almost! But he is lost!

Most of you who have heard the gospel and were convicted in your soul and knew you ought to be saved; your mind was persuaded, your conscience was convinced, but your poor, wicked will rebelled still against God, and you are lost.

"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The Holy Ghost was so mightily poured out, and God so manifest in holiness and majesty during the preaching of that sermon, that the elders threw their arms around the pillars of the church and cried, "Lord, save us, we are slipping down to hell!"

"Almost every night there has been a shaking among the people; and I have seen nearly twenty set at liberty. I believe I should have seen many more, but I cannot yet find one pleading man. There are many good people; but I have found no wrestlers with God. At two or three small places, we had cries for mercy; and several were left in a state of deep distress."—Wm. Bramwell.

"Where the result which he desired did not attend his own ministry, he would spend days and nights almost constantly on his knees, weeping and pleading before God; and especially deploring his own inadequacy to the great work of saving souls. He was at times, when he perceived no movement in the church, literally in agonies; travelling in birth for precious souls, till he saw Christ magnified in their salvation."—Life of John Smith.

"If you spend several hours in prayer daily, you will see great things."—John Nelson.

"He made it a rule to rise out of bed about twelve o'clock, and sit up till two, for prayer and converse with God; then he slept till four; at which time he always rose."—Life of John Nelson.

"Be instant and constant in prayer. Study, books, eloquence, fine sermons, are all nothing without prayer. Prayer brings the spirit, the life, the power."—Memoir of David Stoner.

"I find it necessary to begin at five in the morning and to pray at all opportunities till ten, or eleven at night."—Wm. Bramwell. But must we go back to these mighty men of old? Are there not some today who will ask God to burden them? May we not even in this generation have a Revival in answer to faithful, believing, travelling, prevailing prayer? Oh, then, "Lord, teach us not how to pray, but to pray."

(From the book "The Revival We Need." Published in England by Marshall, Morgan and Scott. Used through the kindness of Dr. Smith.)

You're as lost as if you had never heard the gospel. You are harder in sin, you have gone further than if you had never heard the gospel. Oh, almost persuaded is lost.

Who will say today, "I will not wait any longer." This one festering, sore spot of wickedness that blinds me to the truth and shuts out the gospel and locks the door of my heart and grieves and insults the Holy Spirit, I'll give that up today. I would open the door and say, "Lord Jesus, take this wicked will of mine and make it Yours today." Will you do that? If you will, dear friend, why don't you write to me and say, "Today, this day, not only almost but altogether I am persuaded. I will trust Christ today. I will not wait any longer." To wait is to be lost. Tomorrow never comes. The road of *by and by* leads to the town of *never*. Today is the day of salvation. Will you say, "Today then I will be saved," and not almost but altogether. And write and let us know, and how we will rejoice together over it. Almost is lost. Almost is still lost! Don't be almost, but be altogether as Paul said.

Now will you say, "Brother Rice, for long, long years I have considered this matter." Some of you from the time of your childhood, some of you from the time your mothers talked to you, the time your father prayed for the family, or the time you were in Sunday School and learned the golden text, or the time of a revival campaign in the old-fashioned church; and yet you haven't been saved. Still you are drifting, still undecided. Will you say, "Here and now, the best I can, I will confess myself a wicked sinner, and I will decide the matter." It is a decision of the will. "Here and now I will trust Christ; I will resist Him no more; and I will surrender wholly to Him and take Him as mine." Will you take Him today as yours and be saved?

My Decision for Christ

Will you stop your foolish waiting, throw away your excuses, and deal honestly this time with God? If you want to be saved you can have it settled, here and now. Christ died for you. He loves you and is willing to forgive you today. If you will surrender Him your heart, trust Him to save you this very hour, and will claim Him as your own personal Saviour, how glad I will be to hear it! Tell Christ so, right now. Admit to Him you are a wicked sinner. Turn your heart and soul over to Him right now. Depend upon Him. He will forgive you this moment if you will. Then write me, something like the following letter.

Evangelist John R. Rice, Editor
The Sword of the Lord
512 West Franklin Street
Wheaton, Illinois.

Dear Brother Rice:

I have read your sermon in the Sword of the Lord, "Almost Persuaded." I confess I am a poor sinner. I have been guilty of delay. But here and now I take Christ as my own personal Saviour. I believe He died for me, that He loves me, that He will save me, does save me now. I am glad to let you know, and want your prayers. I will claim Him as my Saviour openly soon, and will try to live for Him daily, by His help.

Signed

Address

Date

Clip the letter out and sign it and mail, if you wish. I will write a personal letter of helpful advice to every one who writes me to tell that you came to take Christ as Saviour through this message. — Editor.

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